

3.0 Responses to Comments

3.1 Responses to Written Comments

Marjorie Jorgensen

Response to Comment 1-1

Comment noted. Information on tree removal for condominium development may be available by contacting the City of Renton's Development Services (425.430.7204) who most likely approved the development permits.

Response to Comment 1-2

In general, the proposed walls will be limited to structures required to maintain safety, facilitate construction of the project, and mitigate project effects. The noise impact analysis is not yet complete so we have not yet determined the appropriate noise wall heights, but noise walls will be subject to a stringent consideration process and visual effects are an important part of that process. Both noise and visual effects will be thoroughly addressed in the Renton to Bellevue EA.

George and Joan Fanning

Response to Comment 2-1

The noise analysis will measure existing noise levels at several locations within the project limits to characterize the existing noise environment. A detailed noise model will be constructed to evaluate future noise levels, including traffic associated with additional lanes. The noise modeling will extend approximately 500 feet from I-405, or greater in cases where noise levels at 500 feet approach the FHWA/WSDOT noise abatement criteria.

WSDOT noise specialists will analyze noise abatement measures in exterior areas where future traffic noise levels are predicted to approach or exceed the criteria at noise sensitive receptors—such as houses, schools, or parks. This analysis will include additional abatement in any areas with existing noise berms or barriers where future noise levels are still predicted to exceed the criteria. The line of sight between I-405 and nearby properties will be considered. The noise analysis will include feasibility and reasonableness criteria as defined by WSDOT and approved by FHWA.

Response to Comment 2-2

The noise impact analysis is not yet complete so we have not yet determined the appropriate noise wall heights, but noise walls will be subject to a stringent consideration process and visual effects are an important part of that process. Please see response to Comment 2-1.

The quantity of right of way we are legally allowed to acquire is set by law. WSDOT will acquire only what is needed for the project.

Irene Botero

Response to Comment 3-1

Please see response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 3-2

Comment noted. We will make the appropriate corrections where necessary. Proposed changes at N 30th will meet current design standards, including provisions for pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Jim Veitengruber

Response to Comment 4-1

Please see response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 4-2

The Visual Quality Discipline Report currently being prepared quantifies visual effects, including how structures will affect the aesthetics. The Renton to Bellevue Project will include mitigation measures and context-sensitive design to vary the scale of walls/berms and create a pleasant visual setting. Context-sensitive design considers the elements of mobility, safety, environment, and aesthetics from beginning to end of the project development process.

Response to Comment 4-3

WSDOT is currently preparing the Transportation Discipline Report for the Renton to Bellevue Project, which will quantify traffic volumes in the study area resulting from construction of the project.

Bernard Johnston

Response to Comment 5-1

Potential effects of increased traffic were documented in the programmatic EIS (August 2002). The EIS looked at the entire I-405 Corridor and analyzed the anticipated increase in traffic and congestion out to the year 2020. From this analysis, WSDOT produced a Selected Alternative as documented in the ROD (October 2002). Section 2.2 of the programmatic EIS describes the Selected Alternative as having 150 individual projects designed to improve mobility and reduce traffic congestion as stated in the Purpose and Need. The Renton to Bellevue EA, a follow up document to the programmatic EIS, and the discipline reports being prepared for the project, will discuss the effects in more detail.

Response to Comment 5-2

WSDOT geologists are currently reviewing all of the existing geotechnical data compiled through soil boring programs for various projects in the last 30 years. The new Bluffs Development, as well as the other recent building developments along Lake Washington Boulevard in this area, is generally underlain by dense, granular soils with limited areas of poor soils. In addition, there appears to be no history of deep-seated landslides, only shallow slides on steep slopes.

The Geology, Soils and Groundwater Discipline Report currently being prepared will evaluate the geotechnical characteristics of the project area. This report will specifically address the potential for landslides and avoidance measures to be undertaken to prevent them.

Response to Comment 5-3

Thank you for your comment. The I-605 proposal was a separate transportation study. The eastside bypass freeway was considered in the screening of alternatives for the programmatic EIS. The EIS did not carry the bypass alternative forward because it is outside the urban growth area, it would not save time for north-south travel, it would have substantial environmental impacts, and the benefits would not outweigh the costs.

The concept that more lanes generate more cars is often referred to as “induced travel.” The programmatic EIS acknowledges that induced travel can occur in response to improvements in transportation accessibility. However, Section 3.12 of the EIS concludes that overall effects of induced demand within the Corridor study area would be limited. For more information, members of the public can view the EIS on the I-405 Project website at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/>. In addition, the Transportation Discipline Report will further document the transportation performance of the Renton to Bellevue Project.

Response to Comment 5-4

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Sound Transit, and King County Department of Transportation partnered to conduct an extensive process of public and agency involvement to identify ways to improve mobility and transportation in the I-405 Corridor. This nearly four-year process involved identifying travel patterns and transportation needs, developing alternative solutions, studying their effects, seeking public and agency comment, and choosing the best alternative. The results of this process are documented in the programmatic EIS and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation issued in June 2002, and ROD dated October 2002. The programmatic EIS identified ways to improve I-405 and transit facilities throughout the 30-mile-long I-405 Corridor through the year 2030.

Our goal is to minimize intrusion to the communities and the traveling public while balancing the cost and duration of the construction activities.

Ahmad Wali Popel

Response to Comment 6-1

Please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 6-2

The project will improve pedestrian connections at the various interchanges throughout the project limits.

Response to Comment 6-3

Please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 6-4

Please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Brian McCarton

Response to Comment 7-1

Right of way property acquisitions will be minimized whenever possible. In situations where additional right of way is needed, property owners will be compensated in accordance with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Relocation resources are available, without discrimination, to anyone who is eligible.

For a discussion of noise wall abatement for noise levels, please see response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 7-2

Please see response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 7-3

Implementation of a physically separated, fixed-guideway high-capacity transit system such as light rail in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway right of way was evaluated in the programmatic EIS as part of Alternative 1 (High-Capacity Transit/Transportation Demand Management [TDM] Emphasis) and Alternative 2 (Mixed Mode with High-Capacity Transit/TDM Emphasis). Light rail in the I-405 Corridor was not included in the adopted Selected Alternative in the ROD.

The Selected Alternative does include implementation of BRT throughout the I-405 Corridor. The current Renton to Bellevue Project EA focuses on design refinements to implement the expansion of I-405 within the Renton to Bellevue section consistent with the I-405 Corridor Program Selected Alternative. The PSRC is conducting a separate study to evaluate the BNSF right of way for transportation uses.

Sally and Dave McCray

Response to Comment 8-1

Please see the response to Comment 2-1. WSDOT will mitigate exterior, not indoor noise levels.

Response to Comment 8-2

WSDOT biologists are currently preparing a Fish and Aquatic Resources Discipline Report as part of the environmental documentation for the Renton to Bellevue Project. This report will document existing conditions of the streams, potential construction effects on them, and avoidance measures to be undertaken to maintain and/or enhance stream function.

Response to Comment 8-3

Please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 8-4

Please see the response to Comments 2-1 and 4-2.

Response to Comment 8-5

You have been added to the project information distribution list. WSDOT employs many methods to keep the public informed such as maintaining an updated website at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/>, which includes a meeting calendar, project update, and a document library. You may also contact our public information officer, Colleen Gants, at 425.456.8500 or email her at colleen.gants@i405.wsdot.wa.gov. The NEPA/SEPA process encourages public involvement and has provisions for public input throughout the entire project which includes mandated public comment periods at key project milestones. The Renton to Bellevue EA will be available for public comment prior to finalizing the environmental process.

City of Renton Planning/Building/Public Works Department

Response to Comment 9-1

Since the scoping meeting in September 2003, the project footprint and project limits have been revised so that the south on- and off-ramps at SR 169 are now within the I-405 right of way. WSDOT is working closely with the City of Renton to develop the optimum design or mitigation as necessary. In addition, WSDOT geologists are evaluating the effects of the project on the City of Renton water supply well and treatment system and will document their findings in the Geology, Soils, and Groundwater Discipline Report. WSDOT is working with the City of Renton to develop an appropriate mitigation plan.

Response to Comment 9-2

Please see the response to Comment 9-1.

The potential effects from the widening of I-405 and the alignment of the northbound off-ramp to SR 169 will be addressed in the Geology, Soils, and Groundwater Discipline Report, as well as future environmental documentation for other project improvements in the area.

Response to Comment 9-3

Please see the response to Comment 9-1.

Mitigation measures for identified effects to the City of Renton well field will be provided in the Geology, Soils, and Groundwater Discipline Report and in the Renton to Bellevue EA.

Response to Comment 9-4

WSDOT is preparing the Public Services and Utilities Discipline Report to provide additional information and details for a more complete analysis of effects to the City of Renton's water supply well system.

We created a task force to study issues and make recommendations. These recommendations are being confirmed in a Letter of Concurrence between the City and the State.

Response to Comment 9-5

Effects to groundwater quantity and quality will be identified in the Geology, Soils, and Groundwater Discipline Report. WSDOT will follow the WAC 246-290-135. See response to comment 9-4 above.

Response to Comment 9-6

The proper management and handling of chemicals during construction will be addressed in the EA. The project construction contractor will be required to meet applicable rules and regulations designed to protect groundwater aquifers and utility systems.

Response to Comment 9-7

See revised project footprint.

Response to Comment 9-8

Conformance to the RMC regulations and standards will be addressed as part of the drainage design for the project.

Response to Comment 9-9

Please refer to the revised project footprint. The project no longer includes construction of a bridge over the Cedar River.

Response to Comment 9-10

The Construction Activity Standards for the Aquifer Protection Area (APA), Zones 1 and 2, from the Renton Municipal Code (RMC) 4-4-030-C7 apply to construction activities occurring in the Aquifer Protection Area. Compliance with the provisions of these standards will be ensured through contractor specific SPCC plans required under WSDOT Standard Specification Section 1-07.15(1).

Response to Comment 9-11

Fill source statements will be filed as appropriate.

Response to Comment 9-12

Please refer to the revised project footprint. Project effects on recreational facilities and mitigation measures will be discussed in the Social Elements and Section 4(f) Discipline Reports.

Response to Comment 9-13

Please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Effects on recreational facilities and mitigation measures will be discussed in the Social Elements and Section 4(f) Discipline Reports. In addition, a noise analysis is being performed as part of the project environmental analysis and noise mitigation measures—including noise walls—will be considered.

Response to Comment 9-14

Noise and air quality effects will be analyzed in the project environmental analysis and in the discipline reports being prepared for the project.

Response to Comment 9-15

Please refer to the revised project footprint. These issues are beyond the scope of environmental review for this project, but will be evaluated in the I-5 to SR 169 Implementation Plan EA, when funded.

Response to Comment 9-16

Comment noted. Air quality effects (including particulate matter) will be addressed in the Air Quality Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 9-17

WSDOT will avoid displacing the maintenance facilities if at all possible. Any effects on park maintenance facilities will be mitigated per required by existing rules and regulations, as evaluated in the Renton to Bellevue Section 4(f) Report.

Response to Comment 9-18

The proposed project accommodates the proposed park access modifications as part of the City of Renton project "SR-169, RENTON HOV Queue-Jump." The existing access to Cedar River Park from the west (Houser Way) will be maintained.

Response to Comment 9-19

Please see the response to Comment 9-15.

Response to Comment 9-20

The effects of shade on plant and turf growth in recreational areas, as well as proposed measures to avoid effects will be addressed in the Section 4(f) Discipline Report and Wildlife and Vegetation Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 9-21

Any effects or damages due to the project construction will be mitigated. WSDOT and/or its contractor will prepare and implement an upland revegetation plan for the proposed project specifying planting procedures, plant species to be used, revegetation locations, and success criteria.

Response to Comment 9-22

Prior to construction activities licensed WSDOT landscape architects will conduct a tree survey to locate significant trees to be avoided and/or mitigated for to compensate potential loss, according to local tree ordinances. The tree survey report will identify tree locations, specify procedures for avoidance or removal, establish compensation values, and/or recommend replacement requirements. The landscape architect will determine if the services of a certified arborist are required.

Response to Comment 9-23

Please see the response to Comment 9-22.

Response to Comment 9-24

Please see the response to Comment 9-22.

Response to Comment 9-25

The City of Renton's request for a licensed landscape contractor will be incorporated into the upland revegetation plan to be prepared for the project.

Response to Comment 9-26

Effects on recreational facilities and mitigation measures will be discussed in the Social Elements and Section 4(f) Discipline Reports.

Response to Comment 9-27

The proposed project accommodates the proposed park access modifications as part of the City of Renton project "SR-169, RENTON HOV Queue-Jump." The design has been modified to avoid impacting the wall being proposed in the Renton to Bellevue project. Any unavoidable effects or damages due to project construction will be mitigated.

Response to Comment 9-28

The Renton to Bellevue Project and the I-405 Corridor Program will implement Context-sensitive Solutions to develop the architectural treatments of the various components of the project and of the program. Context-sensitive Solutions considers the elements of mobility, safety, environment, and aesthetics from beginning to end of the project development process. One of the key goals of the design approach is to include the community and the local agencies in developing the project and program architectural goals and features. Noise walls constructed will meet design criteria established for the corridor noise walls.

Response to Comment 9-29

Comment noted. As detailed in the Renton to Bellevue Public Services and Utilities Discipline Report, a transportation management plan will be implemented and coordinated with all emergency services organizations prior to any construction and detour routes will be provided with signs if periods of closure are needed.

In addition, WSDOT will comply with City road and bicycle access standards.

Response to Comment 9-30

Please see the response to Comment 9-15.

Response to Comment 9-31

Please see the response to Comment 9-15.

Response to Comment 9-32

Please refer to the revised project footprint. The trees are outside the scope of this project.

Response to Comment 9-33

Please refer to the revised project footprint. The oak trees are outside the scope of this project.

Response to Comment 9-34

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Please see the response to Comment 9-22. The oak trees located on Bronson Way will be assessed in the survey.

Response to Comment 9-35

Please see the response to Comment 9-24.

Response to Comment 9-36

Please see the response to Comment 9-25.

Response to Comment 9-37

Please see the response to Comment 9-26.

Response to Comment 9-38

Please refer to the revised project footprint. The skate park is outside the scope of this project.

Response to Comment 9-39

Please refer to the response to comment 9-28.

Response to Comment 9-40

Effects to parks and similar facilities will be avoided wherever possible and all unavoidable effects will be mitigated. The current effort to identify these effects and the possible mitigation measures will be addressed in the Renton to Bellevue EA.

Response to Comment 9-41

Please see the response to Comment 9-40.

Response to Comment 9-42

Any effects or damages due to project construction will be mitigated. WSDOT will prepare and implement an upland revegetation plan for the proposed project specifying planting procedures, plant species to be used, revegetation locations, and success criteria.

Response to Comment 9-43

WSDOT noise specialists are analyzing existing and predicted noise levels to assess how the project is changing the noise characteristics of the project area. WSDOT will then develop mitigation measures.

Response to Comment 9-44

Please refer to the revised project description.

Response to Comment 9-45

Please see the response to Comment 9-40.

Response to Comment 9-46

Comment noted.

Response to Comment 9-47

WSDOT's *2004 Highway Runoff Manual* will be the principal design guide for stormwater management. The Renton to Bellevue EA will discuss the following: the existing drainage system, proposed design standards for the stormwater detention and treatment facilities, the potential effects to the city's drainage system due changes in surface runoff, and any potential mitigation measures for identified effects to the city's drainage system.

Response to Comment 9-48

Wetland losses will be qualitatively addressed in the Wetlands Discipline Report. Wetlands and jurisdictional waters will be identified and addressed prior to implementation of the proposed project. All applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations will be applied to the proposed project to minimize potential effects to jurisdictional and wetland resources.

Response to Comment 9-49

Please see the response to Comment 9-48.

Effects to and potential mitigation measures for riparian habitats, stream buffers and fish passage issues in the project area will be analyzed in the Fish and Aquatic Resources and Wetland Discipline Reports.

Response to Comment 9-50

Please see the response to Comment 9-48. The Fish and Aquatic Resources Discipline Report will address the effects of replacing the existing crossing structure.

Response to Comment 9-51

Comment noted.

Response to Comment 9-52

Comment noted. The pedestrian bridge that you are referring to will not be affected by the project. Therefore no improvements to the bridge are proposed as part of the project.

Response to Comment 9-53

Stormwater is a major concern for any roadway project and will be investigated as part of the environmental assessment process. WSDOT will adhere to the *WSDOT 2004 Highway Runoff Manual* and provide flow control and runoff treatment for 100% of the new impervious surface.

Response to Comment 9-54

WSDOT will closely coordinate with the City of Renton as the project designs and agreements develop. However in general, relocation or replacement of pipelines or structures by WSDOT for the highway project is usually limited to the city system's existing sizes and quality, or to the minimum sizes required by analysis. If the city desires to upgrade to a higher quality, size, or type for its own benefit, the extra cost would typically be the responsibility of the city.

Response to Comment 9-55

WSDOT performed a detailed off-site and cross-drainage analysis. In particular, for the area between the Cedar River to north of NE Park Drive, WSDOT is coordinating drainage design and improvements for both the highway and city drainage systems with a new outfall to Johns Creek (backwater channel area to Lake Washington) closely with the City's drainage department and parks department (for the outlet area). Consensus has been reached for the I-405 design and a Letter of Concurrence is being prepared.

Response to Comment 9-56

The proposed project will comply with all currently adopted shoreline regulations, as appropriate.

Response to Comment 9-57

Traffic effects will be evaluated in the Transportation Discipline Report and the Renton to Bellevue EA.

Response to Comment 9-58

Traffic effects will be evaluated in the Transportation Discipline Report and the Renton to Bellevue EA.

Response to Comment 9-59

Please see the response to Comment 9-57. Project effects on businesses will also be addressed in the Economics Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 9-60

WSDOT is reviewing bikeways and pedestrian connections for continuity, safety, and logical flow between destinations, as detailed in the Transportation Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 9-61

Please see the response to Comment 9-57.

Response to Comment 9-62

The current Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) land use data will be used in the Transportation Discipline Report. Since the scoping meeting, a sensitivity analysis was conducted on the change in traffic operations between PSRC's model and the City of Renton's planned redevelopment. The sensitivity analysis results will be discussed in the Transportation Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 9-63

Please refer to the response to Comment 9-62.

Response to Comment 9-64

Please refer to the response to Comment 9-62.

Response to Comment 9-65

Additional evaluation of the merits and effects of Sunset Boulevard going under or over I-405 has been performed. The result of this evaluation is currently reflected in our preliminary design layouts which show Sunset Blvd. going under I-405. The Transportation Discipline Report will evaluate the changes in traffic associated with the new configuration.

Response to Comment 9-66

Cedar Avenue South and Renton Avenue South are beyond the limits of the Renton to Bellevue Project. This location is part of the South Renton Implementation Plan Project and will be addressed during environmental review for that project.

Response to Comment 9-67

Comment noted. The published realignment of Houser Way was preliminary and the result of a design charette conducted by WSDOT. The WSDOT design team is currently evaluating options for the realignment of Houser Way and Sunset Boulevard.

There is impact to the PACCAR property in order to accommodate the proposed HOV Direct Access at N 8th Street. WSDOT is currently evaluating the structural portion of the ramp to determine if it is possible to minimize the impact to the PACCAR property.

Response to Comment 9-68

Comment noted.

Response to Comment 9-69

Comment noted.

Response to Comment 9-70

Comment noted.

Response to Comment 9-71

The design team has considered this and has determined that the current design will accommodate projected traffic.

Response to Comment 9-72

The past design, Port Quendall Project, of the NE 44th Street interchange did show a loop ramp. The loop ramp was included to mitigate the existing conditions at that time and the design had to match the existing I-405 roadway. The WSDOT design team has considered this and has determined that the current design will accommodate projected traffic.

Response to Comment 9-73

Thank you for all of your comment.

City of Newcastle

Response to Comment 10-1

The Geology, Soils, and Groundwater Discipline Report currently being prepared for the Renton to Bellevue Project will analyze existing slope conditions above I-405 in the vicinity of Newcastle, identify landslide hazard areas and provide proper mitigation to address the effects.

Response to Comment 10-2

The effect of project construction and operation on Newcastle arterials and pedestrian safety, as well as measures to avoid effects will be assessed in the Transportation Discipline Report. Some details of construction traffic mitigation will be refined during the final design phase.

Response to Comment 10-3

WSDOT will endeavor to minimize the amount of property acquisition for the project. Until right of way funding becomes available, WSDOT can not begin the property acquisition process.

Kennydale Neighborhood Association

Response to Comment 11-1

Your comments are much appreciated and all potential effects of the project will be thoroughly addressed in the Renton to Bellevue EA and in the discipline reports being prepared for the project.

Response to Comment 11-2

Please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Response to Comment 11-3

The NE 30th Street and NE 44th Street overcrossings will meet city standards for bike and pedestrian crossings. Effects to neighborhood cohesion will be addressed in the Social Elements Discipline Report and the Renton to Bellevue EA.

Regarding architectural elements, the WSDOT design team has conducted design workshops as part of our "Context Sensitive Solutions" approach to the architectural elements of the projects. These workshops will incorporate suggestions from your neighbors and yourself. Context-sensitive solutions consider the elements of mobility, safety, environment, and aesthetics from beginning to end of the project development process

Response to Comment 11-4

Pedestrian safety will be analyzed as part of the Transportation Discipline Report, which will identify provisions to maintain or enhance the current level of safety.

Response to Comment 11-5

Please see the response to Comment 11-3.

Response to Comment 11-6

Please see the response to Comment 7-3.

Response to Comment 11-7

WSDOT is refining the project design to minimize acquisition of right of way. The alternatives analysis will include a comparison of residential and commercial property acquisition.

Response to Comment 11-8

The Transportation Discipline Report will discuss measures to minimize construction traffic effects. Air and noise concerns will be addressed in the Air Quality and Noise Discipline Reports.

Response to Comment 11-9

Economic effects of the project will be discussed in the Economics Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 11-10

Effects to fisheries, water quality, and air quality will be addressed in the Renton to Bellevue EA and in the discipline reports being prepared for the project.

Transportation Choices Coalition

Response to Comment 12-1

The programmatic EIS did reevaluate the Preferred Alternative identified in November 2001 in response to specific comments and suggestions received from the Transportation Choices Coalition and others. This is documented in the programmatic EIS and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation issued in June 2002, and the ROD dated October 2002. Copies of both of these documents are available on the I-405 Project website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/.

Response to Comment 12-2

The current Renton to Bellevue Project focuses on design refinements to implement the proposed transportation improvement projects within the Renton to Bellevue section consistent with the programmatic EIS Selected Alternative. Both the programmatic EIS and the ROD fully disclose that the level and timing of funding is not certain because it depends on legislative actions. WSDOT committed in the ROD to develop a range of implementation concepts for the Selected Alternative that reflects funding possibilities. This has been accomplished with participation by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the I-405 Executive Committee, local jurisdictions, and the public. The WSDOT, FHWA, FTA, and the I-405 Executive Committee believe the proposed Renton to Bellevue Project is a reasonable and prudent implementation proposal in response to this uncertainty in funding. Development and consideration of alternatives to the adopted Selected Alternative are not required under the current circumstances and are outside the scope of this EA.

Response to Comment 12-3

Please see responses to Comments 12-1 and 12-2. The reasons for not selecting "Alternative Five" are documented in the programmatic EIS and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation issued (June 2002) and ROD (October 2002). Copies of both of these documents are available on the I-405 Project website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/.

Response to Comment 12-4

Please see the responses to Comments 12-1 and 12-2.

Circumstances have not changed to a substantial degree since adoption of the Selected Alternative in the October 2002 ROD. Changes that have occurred do not rise to the level to warrant reconsideration of the Selected Alternative, and no new information has been developed or identified that would suggest a significant change in the level of anticipated effects identified for the Selected Alternative. Prior comments, including those received during the scoping process, are being considered in the design refinements and implementation proposals for the Renton to Bellevue Project.

Response to Comment 12-5

Please see the responses to Comments 12-1, 12-2, and 12-4.

Implementation of a physically separated, fixed-guideway high-capacity transit system such as light rail in the BNSF Railroad right of way was evaluated in the programmatic EIS as part of Alternative 1 High-Capacity Transit/TDM Emphasis and Alternative 2 Mixed Mode with High-Capacity Transit/TDM Emphasis.

The proposed I-405 freeway design does allow for future expansion of managed lanes operation potentially including high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes or congestion pricing. WSDOT has and will continue to investigate the benefits of HOT lanes in the I-405 Corridor.

Response to Comment 12-6

- i. During the Corridor EIS development phase, a 100 percent increase in local transit service compared to the King County's Fall 2001 proposed 6-year plan was introduced as part of the alternatives. Then, during the evaluation phase of the alternatives, King County, Sound Transit, and Community Transit adopted revised transit plans with increased service, so that the level proposed in the Corridor EIS dropped to only 50 percent higher than the newly adopted plans. Finally, during development of the Preferred Alternative, which became the Selected Alternative, it was proposed that local transit service would be increased further to an "up to 75 percent increase" compared to the adopted transit plans. Unfortunately, some of our project material indicates "up to 50 percent increase" which is in error and will be fixed to correctly illustrate the commitment made in the ROD. The project analysis does include an increase in local transit services in addition to Bus Rapid Transit being implemented in the corridor. The increase in local transit services was coordinated with the local transit providers who are responsible for the additional service.
- ii. The freeway performance is based on the existing HOV lanes on I-405 going to a 3+ occupancy requirement. This is consistent with WSDOT's HOV Policy, the Corridor EIS and the ROD.
- iii. The defined TDM program in the Corridor EIS and the ROD was estimated to cost \$72.8M. The I_405 Implementation Plan has a budget of \$43M for TDM, which is 60 percent of the total TDM program.

Response to Comment 12-7

The cumulative effects of the Renton to Bellevue Project will be addressed in the Renton to Bellevue EA and in the Cumulative Effects Analysis Discipline Report being prepared for the project. Regional cumulative and secondary effects resulting from the I-405 Corridor alternatives were also examined in the programmatic EIS.

Scott Kaseburg

Response to Comment 13-1

Thank you for your offer to host a noise monitoring site.

Response to Comment 13-2

A letter and an aerial map of his property with the proposed design were sent to Mr. Kaseburg on October 17, 2003. Please note that WSDOT is continuously refining the

project design and that the design you receive may change as a result of the EA evaluation and comments and as we develop, identify, and collect additional design information.

Response to Comment 13-3

Please see the response to Comments 13-1 and 13-2.

Not all of the proposed walls were displayed in the plan layouts presented at the public meeting. We will be showing proposed wall locations at a future open house.

Suggested mitigation for project effects on freshwater springs, noise levels, and visual quality will be addressed in the respective project EA discipline reports: Fish and Aquatic Resources, Noise, and Visual Quality.

King County Office of Regional Transportation Planning

Response to Comment 14-1

The Fish and Aquatic Resources and Water Quality Discipline Reports being prepared for the Renton to Bellevue Project EA will identify and evaluate potential effects to major and minor surface and subsurface drainage systems in the project area.

Response to Comment 14-2

The stormwater management approach and facilities will be described in the Renton to Bellevue EA.

Response to Comment 14-3

Potential water quality effects will be quantified for conventional parameters (select nutrients and metals). The potential increase in petroleum products will be discussed in the Water Quality Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 14-4

Potential effects from hazardous material will be identified and mitigation measures identified in the Hazardous Materials Discipline Report. Effects on groundwater will be discussed in the Geology/Soils/Groundwater Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 14-5

A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) will be conducted on any property where there is a potential risk of hazardous materials contamination prior to acquisition. Potential effects from hazardous material will be assessed and avoidance measures identified in the Hazardous Materials Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 14-6

WSDOT will prepare discipline reports that analyze separate environmental elements. These reports will provide adequate detailed information regarding the project's potential effects.

Response to Comment 14-7

The Renton to Bellevue Project is being designed as a stand alone project with the anticipation of sufficient funds. If the project is constructed in increments, the need for EA re-evaluations, supplements, and/or addenda will be assessed at that time.

Response to Comment 14-8

Effects due to construction will be evaluated in each discipline report and in the EA. A Traffic Management Plan will be developed to manage transit and emergency vehicle flow through construction zones. WSDOT will also stage construction to minimize the need for lane closures.

WSDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Response to Comment 15-1

The Lake Washington Loop Trail will be reconstructed in the vicinity of Coal Creek Parkway and NE 44th Street. The continuity of the trail system will be maintained. The trail will be temporarily affected during construction. Detours will be required to ensure the safe passage of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Stephen Harlan

Response to Comment 16-1

The existing freeway on-ramp from Sunset Boulevard will be eliminated.

For a discussion of minimizing project noise effects, please see the response to Comment 2-1.

Two general purpose lanes will be added in each direction within the existing right of way where possible. Although most of the widening will occur to the west in the Grandey Way area, total avoidance of Grandey Way is not possible. Thus, a portion of Grandey Way will be impacted by the widening and will result in the relocation of some residents.

WSDOT currently has the preliminary design layouts available that shows existing features such as roads and houses. The “exact”—if you mean final—design, will not be available until construction funds become available and a design-build contractor is selected to advance the project through the final design and construction phases. (A letter and vicinity map were sent to Mr. Harlan on October 17, 2003).

James Loring

Response to Comment 17-1

WSDOT is conducting project-level evaluations of potential adverse effects on historic and cultural resources as part of its NEPA process for the Renton to Bellevue Project. This will include addressing the issues identified in the programmatic EIS and Section 4(f) Evaluation, which provided a corridor-wide, big picture review of potential adverse effects.

Please note that the programmatic EIS did address potential effects that were appropriate for review at the corridor level, and WSDOT proposed the necessary mitigation measures to ensure that anticipated effects did not rise to a level of significance. As provided for in the ROD dated October 2002, the current project-level NEPA review and documentation focuses on site-specific details.

The project-level research and investigations are being conducted in accordance with regulations governing implementation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800). All sections of the project's area of potential effects (APE) are being investigated for areas with a high potential for archaeological resources using surveys and other field investigation techniques. Architectural resources are being investigated within an APE that includes buildings adjacent to the existing transportation facilities. Within this area all buildings more than fifty years of age will be surveyed and evaluated for their potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Finally, WSDOT is eager to respond to all inquiries pertaining to the I-405 Corridor improvements. WSDOT and its partners have continued the extensive public involvement process that was initiated with the programmatic EIS, carrying it forward into the Renton to Bellevue environmental review. We are unaware of any inquiries that have gone without a response. If you have questions to which WSDOT has not responded, we invite and request that you resubmit them to Colleen Gants, I-405 Public Information officer, so that they may be addressed in a timely manner.

Response to Comment 17-2

WSDOT will comply with the requirements of 36 CFR 800. This is continuing through the NEPA process, studies, and environmental documentation now being conducted for the Renton to Bellevue Project. This environmental process must be completed, and the numerous environmental permits and project approvals must be secured before WSDOT initiates project construction.

All previously recorded archaeological and historic sites have been identified. Research and surveys are being conducted to discover any previously unknown sites. In addition, WSDOT has conducted more detailed ethnographic research to identify Traditional Cultural Places and facilitate Tribal consultation. Potential effects on all sites will be evaluated and adverse effects upon National Register-eligible sites will be mitigated, as required by 36 CFR 800.

Response to Comment 17-3

WSDOT is required by 36 CFR 800 to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects to National Register-listed or eligible cultural resources. Mitigation measures for archaeological and historic resources may include avoidance, monitoring, data recovery, or a combination of these methods. In addition, WSDOT will continue to abide by its commitments and conditions identified in the ROD dated October 2002.

Response to Comment 17-4

WSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are committed to conducting appropriate environmental review and preparing the necessary documentation under NEPA and SEPA. At this time, WSDOT and FHWA do not expect that an EIS will be prepared for the Renton to Bellevue Project because its effects are not expected to approach a level of significance that would trigger the need for an EIS.

Whatever the level of environmental documentation, the Renton to Bellevue Project will incorporate by reference the programmatic EIS and Section 4(f) Evaluation issued in June 2002, and the ROD dated October 2002. This will help make clear that issues identified in the EIS are carried forward and addressed appropriately within the Renton to Bellevue section at the project level. It will also help to ensure that commitments specified in the ROD are incorporated as they apply to the Renton to Bellevue Project.

Allan Blackman

Response to Comment 18-1

Double-decking the interstate was evaluated in the programmatic EIS, and this alternative was not advanced because of the high cost associated with constructing such a structure in combination with its environmental effects.

Response to Comment 18-2

Please see the response to Comment 15-1.

Response to Comment 18-3

Streams will be evaluated for the potential of fish presence and results will be documented in the Fish and Aquatic Resources Discipline Report.

Response to Comment 18-4

WSDOT is designing the project to minimize acquisition of new right of way. The current design in the immediate vicinity of Newcastle Beach Park shifts the alignment to the east, so there should not be any need to acquire new right of way on the west side.

Response to Comment 18-5

Please refer to the response to Comment 18-4.

Response to Comment 18-6

Comment noted.

William Damm

Response to Comment 19-1

The area between I-90 and Coal Creek Parkway is very congested. After reviewing several alternatives for this area, WSDOT has concluded that braided ramps would eliminate the weaving and merging between I-90/I-405 and Coal Creek traffic. The braided ramp layout would be similar to the one in your sketch.

WSDOT has also reviewed alternatives for the Coal Creek Parkway/I-405 interchange, specifically the southbound I-405 to eastbound Coal Creek movement. We have concluded that a direct connection, as shown in the sketch, is not a feasible alternative. Please refer to the Project Description for a more detailed discussion of the proposed improvements.

Response to Comment 19-2

Portions of the Lake Washington Loop Trail will be reconstructed and realigned. See the response to comment 15-1 for further detail. There are no plans to relocate the trail onto the railroad right of way.

3.2 Comments Received at the Scoping Meeting

Harry Kodis

Response to Comment SM-1

The proposed retaining wall is a cut wall below existing ground level and would therefore not affect the view from this address on Jones Ave. Ongoing noise analysis and development of the proposed noise mitigation will determine the height of the replacement noise wall if proposed.

Culvert conditions noted. Drainage from I-405 will be captured and treated prior to release. This includes retrofitting the existing roadway in many areas.

Response to Comment SM-2

Construction of the Renton to Bellevue project will be staged to ensure that traffic capacity will be maintained. Effects on arterials roads will be analyzed in the Transportation Discipline Report. A Traffic Management Plan will be developed to help minimize disruptions during construction.

Response to Comment SM-3

Locations of high noise levels listed by concerned persons have been forwarded to the consultant conducting the noise analysis for the Noise Discipline Report.

Response to Comment SM-4

Please see the response to Comment 5-4.

4.0 Agency Scoping Meeting Minutes

[Note: Since the scoping meeting, the project footprint and project limits have been revised. In addition, the name of the project has been changed from the North Renton Project to the Renton to Bellevue Project. The meeting minutes below represent what was said at the meeting. Therefore, some of the responses below contain obsolete information or are now beyond the scope of the project. Outdated information in the following meeting minutes is indicated with an underline. For updated project information, please refer to Section 1.4 of this report.]

4.1 Welcome and Meeting Objective (Christina Martinez)

The objective of the agency scoping meeting is to present the Renton to Bellevue Project to agencies with jurisdiction and to identify local concerns and issues. Issues identified at these meetings will be incorporated into the environmental and design processes. Public concerns and issues will be identified later in the day at a public scoping meeting at Kenneydale Elementary School. Information gathered during this process will be documented in a Scoping Report.

4.2 Introductions (Christina Martinez)

Christina introduced the Environmental Management Team Members (EMT) including herself, Keith McGowan, Ed Murray, and Tracey McKenzie. The EMT is responsible for the environmental analyses for the project. Christina also introduced the Contract Manager for the Renton to Bellevue Project, Roland Benito¹, who is responsible for the project. The EMT and the Contract Manager will work closely together to ensure that the project design meets the overall purpose and need as well as minimizes effects to the environment.

4.3 Selected Alternative Refinement (Roland Benito)

All attendees received an environmental overview and aerial maps with the Renton to Bellevue design overlay. The environmental overview summarizes the known environmental issues for the Renton to Bellevue Project area. This information was largely developed as part of the programmatic EIS. The aerial maps with the Renton to Bellevue design overlay are intended to be used as a starting point for discussions regarding the environmental issues. Although these plans are a starting point, it's important to keep in mind that an extensive screening process was undertaken in order to arrive at that point. WSDOT conducted a series of design charrettes with the intent of designing around known environmental constraints. This was an internal process used to get where we are now. As part of this process, the Selected Alternative contained in the programmatic EIS was refined.

The programmatic EIS yielded the Selected Alternative, which is a multi-modal system of approximately 150 projects advanced from the more than 300 individual projects comprising the alternatives studied in the programmatic EIS.

We are now conducting the project-level NEPA environmental review necessary to advance implementation of the Selected Alternative. We have identified four geographic

¹ John Donatelli is the current contract manager.

sections within which to conduct the project-level evaluations. Our focus today is Renton to Bellevue, extending from approximately SR 169 near the Cedar River in Renton, north to I-90 in Bellevue. This section lies within the cities of Renton, Newcastle, and Bellevue as well as a small portion of King County.

The Selected Alternative was a big picture look at the Corridor in its entirety. Splitting the Corridor into sections allows us to take a closer look at the local area concerns and issues. Charettes were conducted in order to refine the design of each section. Many options were evaluated based on following criteria:

- Integrating goals, issues, and constraints expressed by the public, local jurisdictions, or other agencies
- Achieving project objectives and implementing the Record of Decision
- Minimizing environmental effects

Experts in interchange, roadway, and stormwater were consulted to evaluate nine options based on the above criteria.

Widening options to the east, to the west, and symmetrically were evaluated along with many interchange types. A Best Fit option was eliminated as a result of the charettes. The Best Fit option included a combination of all the widening options. In some areas the roadway would be widened to the west and others to the east or symmetrically. Widening in this fashion limits right of way acquisitions as well as natural resource effects.

We are now in the process of refining this Best Fit option and the design you have is just a starting place to give us something to talk about.

4.4 Design/Build (Roland Benito)

The Renton to Bellevue Project will be a Design/Build effort. It is critical that we have the resource agency support. This project will be different than the typical design-bid-build efforts in that we will be completing a lower level of design before handing it off to a contractor to finish the design and build the project. There are great benefits in terms of schedule. We are going to rely on the experts from the construction industry to come up with the final design and construction methods for this project.

The plan is to provide enough design to be able to answer all the questions that the resource agencies may have. Once they are satisfied we will involve the construction experts. We will provide agencies with all the information they normally receive, but we expect the pace to be different. Will the agencies really need 100% design in order to support their decisions? If not, we want to leave some design room for the construction industry so that they can use their knowledge to come up with innovative techniques that will expedite the construction schedule. We want to clear an envelope so that the design builder can take it and use their expertise to implement the project.

We will be holding a Design/Build Education program and we would like you to participate. It will help all of us understand what Design/Build is all about. We will be contacting you.

4.5 Environmental Assessment (Keith McGowan)

The programmatic EIS provided the foundation on which the project-level EIS will build. The basis for this is documented in the ROD. The project-level analysis will be based on design details, which include:

- limits of right of way
- edge of pavement
- toe of slope, including walls
- walls, including retaining walls and noise walls
- stormwater facilities, technologies and locations
- staging area locations - to the extent known
- stream crossing types and span length
- changes in impervious surfaces
- construction duration, methods and phasing project descriptions - to the extent known.

The EA might look different than what we are accustomed to. It is going to be more “reader friendly” and we plan to have it formatted in a Question and Answer fashion. Discipline reports are being prepared and will provide all the technical information in support of the EA. The discipline reports will be incorporated by reference.

We plan to complete the discipline reports by the fall and issue the EA in the winter of 2005, at which time we will hold a public hearing.

It's expected that the EA will lead to a FONSI. We are confident in taking this approach and we have made extensive progress through the charette efforts in avoiding and reducing effects.

4.6 Cooperating Agencies (Christina Martinez)

Regardless of whether agencies become formal “cooperating” agencies, we will be working in cooperation. Once the discipline reports are completed they will be available for agencies review, although formal comments are not anticipated.

4.7 Permitting Approach (Tracey McKenzie)

The first step in the permitting approach will be to identify all permits. The next step will be to designate whether WSDOT will obtain the permit or if it is more appropriate for the design-builder to obtain the permit.

Based on information contained in the discipline reports, a regulatory analysis will be conducted as part of the environmental review process. The analysis will be part of the EA or as an Appendix or a chapter.

We expect to prepare draft permit applications before issuance of the Final EA.

4.8 Discussion (Roland Benito)

Roland Benito presented the project design as agencies referred to the aerial maps. The table summarizes the main points of discussion with the agencies:

Southern Project Limits

The project begins at the Cedar River; however the plan sheets show more to ensure that the project will fit in with the South Renton Implementation Plan section.

Are the two bridges that provide access to Renton Hill a part of the project? (City of Renton)

Renton Hill access is not part of the Renton to Bellevue project. The two crossings will be addressed as part of the South Renton Implementation Plan project. At this point we can tell you that there is a commitment for maintaining two access locations to the Renton Hill Neighborhood.

I-405/SR 169

- Reconstruct the SR-169 interchange to a split diamond configuration including North 3rd Street
- Reconstruct the northbound off- and southbound on-ramps from I-405 to SR 169
- Provide a southbound I-405 to southbound SR 169 direct connection ramp and a northbound SR 169 to NB I-405 direct connection ramp.

The decision about whether to recommend these ramps as part of the Renton to Bellevue project will be evaluated further based on the results of additional traffic modeling.

How many feet will the project encroach into Liberty Park? (Parks Department, City of Renton)

As shown on sheet 1 of 8 of the preliminary plans (in the Renton to Bellevue project Overview binder), Houser Way would be realigned just to the west of its current location and end in a cul-de-sac just to the south of Bronson Way. This may affect park parking and a sliver of the park property at the northeast corner. The number of square feet of impact has not yet been calculated.

Parking at the parks is an issue (Parks Department, City of Renton)

The parks department expressed concern with regard to park encroachment. Parking is a major issue at both parks. There will be parking effects at Liberty Park near the ball field. Houser Way is wide and if it becomes a cul-de-sac, we could use some of it to replace the park property effects. The plan is to cul-de-sac Houser Way. Houser Way is currently one-way to the north. Changes in this area will depend on negotiations with the BNSF Railway representatives. The railroad has 100-feet of right of way.

Will there be any Cedar River parkland take at the landing of the direct access connection ramps? (Parks Department, City of Renton)

There are issues with the flyover ramps near the Cedar River Park. The idea is to build columns and cantilever the ramps over SR 169 – property acquisitions would be minimized but there may be some shadow effects. This is something that needs to be coordinated with the Renton Parks Department

Will Cedar River clear span allow for a trail? (Parks Department, City of Renton)

The goal here is to clear span almost all water crossings. If piers are in the water we will consider removing them. The goal is to clear span Cedar River and keep

enough land area for the trail. There's lots of stuff underneath the bridge and there is a need for maintenance access, access to a new Sports Complex to be built, and access for the trailhead. Both the road and the trail are critical.

What are the avoidance alternatives for park effects? (FHWA)

When the Proposed Action affects a park you must look at an avoidance option. A stacking option has been identified and will be evaluated as an avoidance alternative.

Other issues

The mainline in this area is constrained by the two parks. The goal was to minimize effects by widening to the west. We will be talking to BNSF Railway representatives to determine the feasibility of realigning the tracks.

In addition there are water supply facilities on both sides of 405. There are existing buildings right next to the ramp at Cedar Park. Options are to avoid or rebuild. We are aware that 80% of the facility is underground. The area is a Sole Source Aquifer. City of Renton is not in favor of relocating wells. The permitting itself can take up to 5 to 10 years. Also the relocated wells must be in operation for a certain amount of time before you can begin construction. Our planning level design indicates that the freeway off-ramp could be built above the wells. However, traffic operations would be compromised since the ramp must come back down to SR 169.

North 3rd Street

- Construct new NB on- and SB off-ramps from I-405 to North 3rd Street to replace the existing movements that occur at Sunset Boulevard (SR 900)
- Provide HOV bypass on the on-ramps
- Reconstruct the bridge structures
- Construct one-way frontage roads NB and SB between SR 169 and North 3rd Street

I-405/Sunset Boulevard

- Reconfigure Sunset Boulevard (SR 900) to an overcrossing with no ramps to and from I-405. Sunset Boulevard will cross over I-405 and connect as a new roadway to Garden Avenue west of I-405.

There are several issues related to the reconfiguration of Sunset Boulevard (SR-900). It's important to minimize effects to businesses; they are so close and not a lot of room. Paccar property has potential hazardous waste issues. Don't want an at-grade crossing at the RR so going underneath I-405 does not work. Paccar has development plans.

Why can't Sunset Boulevard connect to the local street system to the south of the current design? (City of Renton)

If we make a southern turn we will need to reevaluate. If Sunset Boulevard stays connected to the local street system, then the traffic problems remain. This is an option however and will be negotiated with the City.

North 8th Street

- Provide a direct access HOV ramp in the I-405 mainline at North 8th Street. This provision will provide north and south transit/HOV access from I-405 to the west at 8th Street.

Will the Renton to Bellevue design fully cover the Sound Transit Project at North 8th Street (FTA)?

Yes, the provisions for a direct access HOV ramp at North 8th Street will be covered under this EA. This is a Sound Transit project and integrating it into the I-405 project will save time and money. You can build North 8th without impacting existing traffic. This is designed as part of this project. WSDOT will take it on so there is no need to redo work. The FTA agrees that it should go through one process.

I-405/NE Park Drive

- Reconfigure the NE Park Drive interchange to a diamond interchange, including HOV bypass for the on-ramps and replacing the bridge structure
- Provide a new northbound ramp (ultimate build-out proposal) creating the auxiliary truck-climbing lane.

The reconfiguration of the NE Park Drive will add more capacity. The topography is not that great in this area so there will be truck-climbing lanes north of NE Park Drive over the crest of North 30th Street. The mainline will be widened symmetrically in this area. It's hard to come up with a decent alignment to accommodate a single-point-urban interchange. The west is fully developed so we'll shift to the east to avoid apartments. Further north still symmetrical and a lot of walls. There are not enough details yet to determine the interchange type. What we show now, however, shows the most footprint.

I-405/North 30th Street

- Reconstruct the NE 30th Street interchange to accommodate the widened freeway, including HOV bypass for the on-ramps and replacing the bridge structure

Reconstructing the NE 30th Street interchange will provide a better connection between the community on the east and the community on the west. The design is intended to minimize effects to May Creek and the Kenndale neighborhood. Because there are steep slopes down to the creek, the widening of I-405 would be cantilevered on the east side. Near May Creek the alignment is to the west. The goal is to balance the need to maintain street access and to avoid effects to the creek. The cantilever may have a shadow impact on the slopes.

Noise – context sensitive design issues. With berms you need more property but you can have landscaping. Right now you have I-405, noise wall, house. Landscaped berm might be an improvement.

Are alignment decisions considering the impact between partial takes and full takes? Some residences may prefer one over the other.

Property effects are an issue – half-takes cause greater concern. There is room to negotiate when it comes to acquiring only a piece of the property or acquiring the whole house. When people can make that choice there will be flexibility. There may be alignment refinements, based on conversations with residents.

The Kennydale School District is going to rebuild the existing Kennydale School. Is this being considered in terms of alignment within this area?

Avoiding the Kennydale School was a major issue in this area. Schools have a square footage requirement and the school currently does not meet requirements, so any property acquired from the school would exacerbate that problem. Renton School District will be rebuilding Kennydale School and this will be a consideration. The School District has no design plans yet. The plan is to temporarily locate students at Newcastle school while Kennydale is rebuilt.

I-405/NE 44th Street

- Reconstruct the NE 44th Street interchange to accommodate the widened freeway, including added capacity on NE 44th Street and the ramps as well as HOV bypass for the on-ramps and replacement of the bridge structure.

The NE 44th Street interchange is based on the design proposed for the Port Quendall design. Widening the mainline is symmetrical to NE 44th. The Boeing Redevelopment plan analysis shows need for loop ramps in the SE quadrant of 44th and Park. An east loop ramp would require us to push out the currently designed interchange. Ramp locations to the west but also minimize residences. Widen existing structure there may be shadowing --widening because ramps have to span creek...tried to carry ramps as far as they could. North of 44th widen to the east. Bike path west of I-405 restricted by the Railroad right of way.

What are the effects to May Creek? (King County DOT)

We plan to clear span May Creek. We've looked at it and it appears to be pretty easy. Also, the facility has been aligned to avoid May Creek Park.

SE 76th Street

- Widen I-405 across May Creek, possibly by cantilevering or other engineered support system to span the channel without adding piers
- Widen the mainline to the east and relocate Lake Washington Blvd.
- Provide a direct access HOV ramp in the I-405 mainline at SE 76th Street, which allows north and south transit/HOV access from I-405 to the west and east at 76th Street. Accommodate for future access from the west for future land uses. Accommodate future land uses at Quendall, Baxter, and Genie.
- Accommodate the footprint for a future direct access HOV ramp in the I-405 mainline at SE 76th Street to provide north and south transit/HOV access from I-405 to the west and east at 76th Street

Widening to the east affects property. If you widen to the west you start affecting access to those lakefront properties. Lots of walls in this area and drainage issues.

What is the plume shown on Sheet 6? (King County DOT)

The plume on the aerial may indicate erosion. There has been a lot of development going on to the east. There's a lot of sedimentation and cross-culverts. This is a problem location. We will make sure that stormwater facilities are in place early to avoid erosion and sedimentation during construction.

112th Avenue SE

- Relocate the 112th Avenue SE interchange to the south to accommodate the widened freeway and construction of a flyer stop serving the park-and-ride at 112th Avenue SE
- Construct an HOV bypass for the on-ramps and replace the bridge structure
- Construct a transit flyer stop at 112th Avenue SE in the I-405 median with pedestrian access from the median to the existing park-and-ride lot east of I-405
- Modify the park-and-ride lot to accommodate the widened freeway.

The park-and-ride will be a three-story structure which would provide more capacity with minimal new right of way. Multistory also allows for a nice in-line station. Relocating the interchange to the south works because you have to rebuild the interchange for the mainline widening anyway. Need to maintain access to the residences to the west.

I-405/Coal Creek Parkway

- Reconstruct the Coal Creek Parkway interchange to accommodate the widened freeway
- Construct ramp improvements to and from I-90
- Provide an HOV bypass for the on-ramps at Coal Creek Parkway and replace the bridge structure
- Reconstruct the Coal Creek Parkway interchange and ramp improvements to and from I-90.

The design shows widening to the east to avoid the railroad tracks and the neighborhoods. Right of way to the east there will be big cuts and high walls 30 to 40-feet. The ramps will be reconstructed and Coal Creek which is currently in a box culvert will be daylighted. The culvert is currently 470-feet long. There will be environmental benefits and we will pursue that and see how the agencies feel about it. Need support in order to implement this idea.

Other Questions:

What were the nine options? What are the phasing concepts? (King County)

During the charrette process, local and national engineering experts developed design ideas for the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Project. Some ideas were determined to be fatally-flawed or pulled from consideration due to unacceptable traffic, social, or environmental issues. This information is being documented in a project screening report.

At this time, there are no specific phasing concepts for implementing the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Project. Project phasing will largely depend upon project funding.

Are we going above and beyond the typical mitigation efforts? (King County DNR)

We hope to initiate early environmental enhancement, restoration, or creation projects. We say “early” because we want these environmental investments to occur prior to transportation project construction so that the environmental benefits are realized before the effects occur. Also, we are taking a watershed based approach

to identify locations where the environmental investment makes the most sense for overall watershed recovery. In a sense we are going above and beyond typical efforts because we will be making early environmental investments using a watershed-based approach. However, we do not anticipate mitigating for effects beyond those that would be associated with the transportation improvements.

Do you need to describe potential alternatives if this scoping meeting will serve as an EIS scoping? (King County DOT)

We realize that scoping done before an environmental assessment cannot substitute for the normal scoping process that would occur after publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS. Hence, while we do not anticipate holding additional scoping meetings if an EIS is required, any NOI will expressly provide that written comments on the scope of alternatives and effects will still be considered.

Our public notice on this scoping meeting stated clearly that if an EIS were to be prepared “no additional scoping meetings will be held. However, the Notice of Intent, published in the Federal and SEPA Registers, would expressly provide that written comments on the scope of alternatives, potential effects, and identification of resources would be collected and considered.

How is the regulatory permitting process related to what TPEAC is doing?

WSDOT has the option to use the permit streamlining processes developed by the Transportation Permitting Efficiency and Accountability Committees; however, no decision has yet been made in this regard.

What level of analysis is being conducted for the Discipline Reports?

Analyses in the discipline reports will be prepared consistent with the project-level methodologies outlined in the WSDOT Environmental Procedures Manual.

Is there a potential for phasing?

We did not look at it during the charettes. We are just recently looking at how to stage. For instance we are looking at the direct connectors to 169 and determining whether we need them upon opening or sometime in the future.

Will the EA look at something that is less than what we have here?

The nine options evaluated during the charrette were within the range of alternatives evaluated in the Corridor Program EIS. We expect to evaluate one alternative the “Proposed Action” all the time making sure that it is consistent with the Selected Alternative in the EIS.

What mitigation opportunities are you looking at? (King County DNR)

There are many areas for mitigation opportunities along the corridor. We are looking within the watershed for mitigation looking adjacent to the facility and regionally. We are considering low impact development designs for stormwater facilities. Watershed Characterization for Renton to Bellevue is due at the end of the month and we hope to have a list of environmental opportunities/mitigation sites. No areas yet but will have some areas identified. Identify opportunities and because they are outside the project area take care of them early and make sure that the agencies give appropriate credit.

What is typically would be viewed as mitigation would become part of the project.

Are you going above and beyond what would typically be required by permits?

We want to propose the best mitigation practical and feasible.

What is the risk of an EA versus an EIS? The number of Discipline Reports suggests an EIS.

We recognize that there are risks. We will be prepared for a change of direction if it comes up. The discipline reports will have sufficient data in them so that we will not have to redo any work if it became an EIS. We would however need to analyze alternatives.

Jim Leonard of the FHWA explained that if there are “significant” effects identified, the WSDOT would mitigate to a level of insignificance.

Is the air quality analysis going to address atmospheric wet and dry deposition?

This is something we typically don’t see but it can be brought up in the comment period. We will talk to the Air Quality and the Water Quality experts to determine if this needs to be addressed.

How does the Renton to Bellevue project fit within the Corridor Program?

The Renton to Bellevue Project is part of the larger package of transportation improvements contained in the I-405 Corridor master plan. It is one of four sections within the corridor currently undergoing environmental review. The sections were defined to ensure that related transportation improvements are evaluated together at a project level within a geographic section of I-405 that has independent utility, logical termini, and is meaningful to the affected public.

The larger I-405 Master Plan is a multimodal system of improvements cleared through the programmatic EIS and identified as the Selected Alternative in the ROD October 2002. The Renton to Bellevue Project is programmed as part of the Phase II 10-year phased implementation of that Selected Alternative. Unlike the three funded I-405 nickel projects in South Renton, Bellevue, and Kirkland, the Renton to Bellevue Project is proposed to be funded primarily through the Regional Transportation Investment District package that is expected to be advanced to voters in the three-county region in November 2004.

How do we get the most complete set of program and/or project information?

The programmatic EIS and ROD contain the most complete I-405 Corridor Program information.

Why is the Renton to Bellevue project the first I-405 project to go through NEPA?

The WSDOT received early funds from the City of Renton to develop footprint engineering for the Renton to Bellevue Project. At this time the Renton to Bellevue project has a greater level of design than any other I-405 project and is primed for NEPA review. In addition, WSDOT hopes to be in the position to receive funds and get to construction for the Renton to Bellevue project in the near future.

What is the status of right of way acquisition?

We have not initiated right of way acquisition for any of the I-405 projects but are currently identifying acquisition needs. We currently know what right of way would be required for the Renton to Bellevue project.

Who/what groups could be opposed to this project and what are their issues?

The Transportation Choices Coalition was actively involved during the I-405 Corridor EIS process. They were mainly concerned with transportation modal balance, potential for induced growth, and air/noise effects. Another active group is the Kennydale Neighborhood Association, mainly concerned with property acquisition and noise issues associated with the project.

What is the public involvement plan and who is coordinating it?

Colleen Gants, WSDOT public information officer, is coordinating the public involvement plan.

Will you incorporate local regulations and follow local guidance in writing our discipline reports?

The DRs will be written in accordance with the WSDOT Environmental Procedures Manual and should meet the report requirements for local jurisdictions in terms of critical areas. Make sure you review local Critical Areas Ordinances (CAOs) and that your report includes the information necessary to comply with the regulations.

4.9 Comment Letters

If you have issues please send us a letter and mail to Christina Martinez by October 17, 2003. Comment forms were passed out and Christina mentioned that they can also be obtained on the web-site.